The impact of digital marketing in attracting Gen Z

people towards new fashion trends in the UK

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

With the advent of digital marketing, there has been a substantial change in the fashion industry as regards its ability to attract the younger customers (Elverina and Furinto, 2021). The new generation born or younger generation that can be regarded as generation Z is tech-savvy (Mantha, M.S. and Krishna, 2024), and they are also socially conscious, and trend-led consumers who exert profound effects on consumer behaviour. The target audience of this group will spend significant time online, particularly in such social networks and applications as Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, and Snapchat, where fashion trends are often presented, described, and followed.

When a traditional advert loses effectiveness among population, brands have moved to the adoption of influencer marketing, user created content, interactive campaigns and short form video content as more effective means of ensuring engagement and brand loyalty (Liu, 2024). Gen Z consumers are guided by the principles of authenticity, inclusiveness, and responsibilities to society, and this is the way they will react to digital marketing strategies.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the role that digital marketing tools and platforms play in swaying Gen Z towards certain fashion preferences in the UK market. It researches what will most effectively get their attention, what online tendencies they consider in making decisions about what to buy, and how influencers and social media are able to affect their purchasing behaviour. These reasons are essential in making fashion brands remain relevant and competitive in the fast changing digital world where younger and highly connected consumers dominate.

1.2 Research rationale and scope of the research

Rationale

The fashion industry is very dynamic sector and it is influenced by the consumer behaviour, changes in culture and technology (Gurnani and Gupta, 2024). Generation Z is one of the most influential consumer groups of the modern time, and the preferences and purchasing behaviour of its representatives are highly affected by the digital content and social media (Behbahani and Develi, 2023). This is a generation that demands that brands should not just be aware of the trend but also the digitally fluent, inclusive and socially responsible. However, based on the changing requirements of this generation, fashion businesses may face issues to understand how to attract this group of consumers especially in the fast-trending environment. The study is significant because it presents practical knowledge of how fashionable brands can plan digital marketing strategies that are not only eye-catching but also response to the values and expectations of Gen-Z in the UK market.

Scope

The targeted population of this investigation is the UK fashion market and the Generation Z group of people. It is discussing the different digital marketing techniques as a form of influencer marketing, social media campaign, user-generated content, and short-form video promotions. The research undertaking is attempting to find how these tools influence the awareness, interest, and preferences of Gen Z when it comes to fashion trends and making purchasing decisions. The concerns of the research does not include the traditional approaches to marketing, elders, and fashion industry beyond the UK. The data on the digital platforms which have a high engagement among Gen Z population, like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, isa being analysed in depth. The results is expected to be of value to fashion marketers, retailers and entrepreneurs who want to relate better with younger customers in a very competitive online world.

1.3 Problem Statement

The UK fashion industry is under pressure as it is expected to be flexible to fast changing preferences by Generation Z, a new generation, which

now has substantial buying capacities and cultural authorship. Jin and Shin (2021) have stated that the global fashion industry is facing the pressure of changing consumers' needs. However, the matter is that print advertising, television, and in-store promotions and other traditional methods of marketing are now less likely to attract the attention of this digital-first generation. Consumers of Gen Z are active on social media and choose the brands that communicate via digital platforms in a conversational style that is authentic, engaging, and visually attractive.

However, the problem is that although fashion brands have incorporated digital marketing strategies to a greater extent in the past couple of years, not all have been successful in translating the digital experience into generating a successful customer loyalty and leading to sales. As per Senanu et al., (2023) SMES in the clothing sector are facing challenges with respect to digital media marketing and based on this fact, it is clear that researches are needed to find out that aspects of digital marketing that can help these businesses in developing brand loyalty through proper and engaging marketing strategy.

On the other hand, businesses sometimes lack specific knowledge that would define what kinds of digital marketing trends have the most significant effect on this generation of consumers when it comes to influenced fashion taste. Moreover, the high rate of consumption of digital contents implies that trends can expire fast thus developing difficulties in a brand to remain relevant.

By considering all of these factors this study is aimed to serve to fill this research gap because it will examine the role of digital marketing on the UK trends Gen Z adapts. Determining what strategies are most appealing to this audience, the study will offer information that can be used to better contextualise the marketing activities in such a way that fashion brands can match the expectations and behaviour of the Gen Z consumers.

1.4 Research aim

The research is aimed to find out the ways digital marketing can help businesses of fashion sector in the UK towards new fashion trends. In order to do the same, the research is going to assess the current digital marketing strategies used by the businesses currently and its gaps and benefits in attracting gen Z customers towards new fashion trends. The research will be impactful for the fashion sector of the UK as it is aimed to provide some strategies that the fashion sector in the UK can adopt in regard to their digital marketing process to ensure these are enough to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends.

1.5 Research objectives

- To evaluate the impact of digital marketing in attracting gen Z customers in the UK towards new fashion trends
- To assess the digital marketing strategies used by UK fashion businesses to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends
- To find out the challenges and benefits of digital marketing strategies used by UK fashion businesses to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends
- To mitigate the gap of previous literature by finding out the strategies that particularly the UK fashion businesses can adopt to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends

1.6 Research questions

- What is the impact of digital marketing in attracting gen Z customers in the UK towards new fashion trends?
- What are the digital marketing strategies used by UK fashion businesses to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends?
- What are the challenges and benefits of digital marketing strategies used by UK fashion businesses to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends?
- What are the strategies that particularly the UK fashion businesses can adopt to attract gen Z customers towards new fashion trends?

1.7 Dissertation structure

The dissertation is following a proper systematic structure where chapter 1 is giving information about the research topic, aim, objectives, scope and rationale. By reading chapter 1, a basic idea about the research can be generated.

In chapter 2, literary pieces on the topic are going to be reviewed with the aim of developinmg an insight about it.

In chapter 3, the research methodology is going to be discussed. The research is using the secondary method and in chapter 3 the justification of it is being provided with a detailed discussion.

IN chapter 4, findings from resources are going to be shown and the discussion is being made based on it.

Chapter 5 is the last chapter where the objectives are being linked with research findings and the limitations are being shown and future research-based recommendations are being given.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Digital marketing has transformed fashion brand-consumer relationship, particularly by Gen Z in the UK in the recent years (Farys., 2025). The generation that has grown up with these technologies and was born in the period between the middle of the 1990s and the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, resorts well to electronic publications, use of social media, and interaction online. Digital platforms serve as major vehicles in creating awareness, adopting, and loyalty as new fashion trends keep popping. The fashion and digital marketing overlap the opportunities and challenges posed by the brands that need to keep up to date. This review bases its review on the methods to which digital marketing impacts the fashion styles of Gen Z and also focuses on the effective ways to capture this audience in the UK.

2.2 The Concept of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing Digital marketing encompasses the usage of digital technologies, mainly internet-based, in an attempt to promote products, services, and brands (Durmaz and Akan., 2023). It incorporates a great diversity of tools and strategies aimed at approaching consumers via mechanisms of Internet sites, social media, emails, mobile applications, and search engines. Conversely, unlike traditional marketing, digital marketing lets brands notice almost instant responses, allows them to collect in-depth analytics about the responses, and offers highly specific targeting as well, meaning that the brands can now apply personalized content and engage with the audiences in real-time (Rowles, 2022).

Social media marketing is one of the fundamental elements of digital marketing that involves the use of Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, and X (previously Twitter) to establish brand presence and promote products in organic and paid versions (Hammer., 2024). By supporting the claim,

Malesev and Cherry (2021) have stated businesses can use these platforms to interact directly with their users and build communities based on their brand and use user generated content to meet the needs of trust and credibility. Social media is also of huge importance to fashion brands, as it facilitates visual storytelling, the showcase of trends, and partnering with an influence, all of which are crucial to attracting customers.

Search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO) is yet another big thing. SEO aims at improving the online exposure of a brand within organic search engines, whereas SEM so-called paid advertising initiatives involve Google Ads (Cutler., 2023). The approaches assist companies to place their contents before users who are actively seeking fashion trends or products, and they can find and convert. This kind of advertising, known as influencer marketing, has gained so much popularity in online marketing.

Though one of the oldest forms of digital communication, the benefits of email marketing include providing readers with personal information, special deals, and new trends as well as instantly sending the information directly to the consumer (Hartemo, 2022). With the use of AI and behavioural information, the customization of email campaigns can be very high, which makes them more relevant and wearable.

As per Lopes and Casais (2022), one more pillar of the digital marketing is content marketing. On the other hand, ADDIS (2025) has supported the same by claiming the examples of contents produced by brands include blogs, videos, behind-the-scenes footage, styling guides, or trend forecasts. Fashion brands, represented by websites and social media pages, create persuasive content that sells items in addition to creating life stories that resonate with customers' sense of identity and values.

Instead of paying attention to the content marketing only, Raufjonov (2023) has focused on the whole mobile marketing process and have stated that the popularity of mobile marketing has appeared due to the eruption of smartphones. Brands can reach users across devices through

fashion applications, push notification, geolocation-powered offers and user-friendly websites. This is a critical component of digital marketing practices because of Gen Z being mobile-first.

All digital marketing processes rely on analytics and data-based insights (Islam., 2024). The tools help brands to track the traffic on the websites, social media interaction, conversion and the preferences of the customers. These insights allow responses to be tuned by marketers and segregate to a personal level and maximize with time.

Last but not least are the newly developed technologies, which include artificial intelligence, augmented reality (AR), and chatbots, to add capabilities to digital marketing. The recommendation engines and predictive modelling are done with AI and the virtual try-ons and other immersive shopping experiences as well as the 24-hour customer service is provided with AR and chatbots (Ziakis et al., 2023). All these advances give buyers the interest and high-tech experiences they demand of fashion businesses today.

2.3 How Digital Marketing Attracts People in the Current Era

Marketing in the modern context of the digital society is no longer one way communication process (Shevchenko et al., 2022). By considering the analytical view of the author, it can be stated that it has become a two-way synchronous conversation in which the brands and the consumers do value exchange. This change is specifically seen in the manner to which digital marketing strategies are developed so as to capture and hold the attention of audiences belonging to different demographics.

Digital marketing has contributed to social media as a vital tool in engaging users in digital marketing strategies (Khanom, 2023). The platforms are not just a good source of entertainment or contact anymore, but a powerful medium where people find or learn about products and experience brands. Since it has been found that short-form video formats engage people, TikTok, Instagram Reels, and other

platforms that rely heavily on short video content are used by many companies to convey their message with the help of visually appealing and compact videos. These formats are appropriate because of their preference to the contemporary consumer who prefers fast moving and dynamic content.

The next important component is personalisation. Digital marketing facilitates the process of brands customizing content to the preferences of users because of the online actions, interests, geographical locations, and the preferences of the users (Nuseir et al., 2023). Consumers always get the impression that their needs are recognized and appreciated as they are analysed by algorithms and some relevant products or trends are suggested. The use of this selective method tends to enhance activities and customer buying percentage.

By contradicting the point of view of previous authors who have focused on the importance of digital marketing and personalisation of the marketing process, Devos et al., (2022) have stated that it is also important to engage an influencer. Micro and nano influencers portray themselves as ordinary people with ordinary living lifestyles opposite to the traditional celebrities. They give credible and trustworthy endorsements as they are natural and unscripted. By partnering with influencers that share its values, brands are able to reach segments of active and loyal customers.

The other thing that became important in digital marketing in recent years is the creation of user-generated content (UGC) (Pasaribu et al., 2024). A layer of social proof is achieved due to UGC, which is the feedback on products left by customers, photos or videos conveyed by customers. Viewing others who used and recommended a product create trust and confidence in the viewer to either purchase the same product. Consumer-generated-content campaigns to which they have contributed themselves, such as a hashtag challenge or competition, enhance brand loyalty and community sense, too.

Interactive experiences are gaining growth. More interactive functionality, such as a live shopping experience, polls, quizzes, and augmented reality (AR) filters provides a more interactive setting (Xue, 2022). TikTok, Instagram, and other platforms help users to communicate with influencers in real time during live shopping events, ask questions, and receive the products immediately. Work experiences create intimacy and closeness.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is one of the most popular psychological tricks. Scheduled promotions, special product launches, and countdowns are a technique digital marketers do to create a sense of urgency and encourage desperate action. When consumers come across objects of limited time or objects that are popular, they have further urge to participate.

Digital marketing involves the building of community, which is one of the pillars of successful digital marketing. Customers are not interested in transacting; they want to be attracted to the brands they identify with their values and they are also interested in access to exclusive communities (Cagnin and Nicolas, 2022). Use of digital platforms allows brands to align with social movements like sustainability, diversity and body positivity thus creating emotional bonds as well as lifetime relationships with the audience.

Diversifying with memes, viral content, and references to cultures is another useful practice. Companies whose tone is similar to the one found customers are more natural and closer. These common cultural points of touch establish a sense of a conversation rather than a sale when it comes to marketing.

According to Mukhtar (2024), last but not least, message consistency and accessibility are promoted through cross platforms. A consumer should have a seamless experience with a brand whether he or she is on social media, a web page, by email, or whether he or she is on a mobile application. Such a combined strategy helps achieve a greater brand identity and can be used to enhance customer retention.

2.4 The Use of Digital Marketing Strategy in the Fashion Industry

The emergence of online marketing has brought in a drastic change of face to the world of fashion (Alzahrani., 2021). Print and TV traditional advertising give way to such data-driven and interactive advertising approaches, most of which are assumed to work within the digital environment. Digital marketing strategy is no longer a discretionary factor to fashion brands and particularly the brands targeting customers since it is now regarded as a fundamental growth and brand positioning strategy as well as a key value of lasting relevance.

Among the most effective approaches to fashion marketing, nowadays, influencer cooperation is observed. Influencers on social media collaborate with brands to market their collection, create hype on new releases, and in the effort of authenticity (Hund., 2023). These are not only world famous fashion personalities but also smaller micro-influencers who have very engaged followers. The latter tend to be more influential, who are not so interested in becoming celebrities but in being relatable and authentic. Influencers introduce fashion brands to everyday consumer lifestyles through sponsored posts, styling reels, and the backstage actions.

Another important digital strategy is the social media campaigns (Matosas-López, 2021). The content that is published by brands is platform specific because they aim to take advantage of its characteristics. Instagram, in turn, is the best fit for well-groomed visual content, shoppable posts, and carousel lookbooks. You could, on the contrary, Tik Tok soars on short and dynamic videos where outfit changes, fashion hacks, or creation challenges are most often. Trending music, hashtags, and challenges assist the fashion brands to target extended groups of people and become viral.

Marketing of fashion through paid adverts on online platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Google, and YouTube has also become core to the strategies (Handono et al., 2024). Such advertisements are very specific when it comes to the demographics, user behaviour, and interests. To the

very kind of customer that they are targeting, brands are able to advertise certain products, time-sensitive deals or seasons-based units. These campaigns are measurable and hence can be adjusted swiftly to achieve maximum performance and budget.

When this is conducted strategically, the approach of email marketing gives direct reach of touching the customers. Fashion companies employ it to provide access to pre-sale, customized suggestions, reward points, and fashion content. Segmentation and automation of email can assist to do this properly so that everybody receives the correct message at the correct moment.

Website personalization is another technique being substantially adopted by many fashion firms. The online shopping experience can be tailored to the needs of the brand by monitoring the browsing history, the prior purchases, and the behavioural statistics (Bourg et al., 2023). An exiting customer can find a home page that is run according to their personal choice with product suggestions that are sized, designed or in the colour of their choice. This is what makes repeat purchasing most probable and provides customer loyalty.

The other critical tactic is content marketing. The fashion brands have become publishers and they publish blogs, video editorials, trend reports and style guides. The strategy would not only make the search engine visible but also make the brand an industry thought leader. Storytelling is also a significant aspect here- telling about what inspired certain collections, how a certain garment was designed or what sustainable measures went into creating it, etc. will establish an emotional appeal to consumers.

Some of the emerging technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and the use of virtual try-on functions are stretching the limits of digital marketing of fashion items (Patnaik., 2024). AR apps allow a person to see how an item of clothing or a accessory will suit them before making a purchase. This decreases uncertainty and returns besides improving the online-shopping experience. Gen Z, especially, is likely to react well to

the gamified and immersive experience that can mix gaming and purchasing.

The online retail environment is changing due to live shopping, whose popularity grows on such platforms as TikTok or Instagram (Hu, 2024). It is a hybrid of entertainment, real-time communication, and direct buying, in-store shopping with all its frills, only in an online setting. Hosts, who usually are influencers or stylists, show off products, respond to users and provide special offers with the feeling of urgency and excitement.

Sustainability messaging and its digital delivery is also an element that the fashion brands are giving serious consideration. A considerable percentage of Gen Z consumers are very aware of ethical and environmental problems (Le et al. 2022). Transparent brands, those who have an overall digital presence, sharing their commitment to sustainability, or engaging their consumers with environmentally friendly projects would attract loyalty.

Lastly, data analytics is instrumental in creating and redefining the digital marketing strategy. The brands review the measures of performance on all the digital touchpoints such as the rates of click-through, bounce rates, engagement, and conversion rates, which enable them to know what is working well and where to focus on making reasonable improvements. Such data-based strategy promises that marketing can be dynamic, efficient, and meets the demands of customers.

2.5 New Fashion Trends in the UK and the Impact of Digital Marketing in Making People Aware of It

Due to its dynamic culture of street fashions, high-end and cultural difference the UK fashion scene is highly recognized as an exciting mix of all fashion references. The new fashion trends have appeared and developed very fast over the last few years with the digital environment playing an essential role. Digital marketing has been at the forefront of finding, magnifying and normalizing such trends, at least in the young

generation, who are on the fore-front of online activities (Gen Z consumers).

Social media such as Tik Tok and Instagram can be discussed as one of the most potent sources of the trend emergence in the UK. Such mediums are online runaways where new looks can become viral in a day (Lorenz., 2023). Short form videos, styling challenges, and user generated and influencer-created viral content have popularized trends like oversized clothing, even the so called clean girl aesthetics, gender-fluid fashion, and Y2K-inspired outfits. A lot of these tendencies are not a product of luxury catwalks but a product of common people who by playing in their extensive wardrobe and offering it to a mass of followers throughout the world have created a booming industry that can never be stopped.

Digital marketing increases persuasiveness and rate of trend propagation. Brands focus on how social media is used and which aesthetics prove a success (Bakri., 2023). They are then fast to adjust their marketing campaigns and products to these new forms of styles. Specifically, fast fashion retailers can go through such a cycle in a matter of days, i.e., they leverage digital feedback loops to enable identifying a trend on a certain day and promoting it within just few days. Such responsiveness can only occur due to the real time data and interaction which digital marketing offers.

Another tool that has not lost its potential in bringing people into their awareness of new trends is influencer marketing. UK fashion influencers tend to be a tone-setter of what grows popular through sharing outfit ideas, inspiration, and dressing videos, as well as predicting trends. These trendsetters act as decoders of styles, bringing lofty abstract styles or runway ideas down to earth and showing them as something one can wear. Companies work with such people in order to maximize trends by using sponsored content, affiliate links, or exclusive collections. The loyalty and familiarity that are created in the course of the relations with

the influencer makes them attempt to incorporate new styles, which would otherwise have been overlooked.

The increase in shoppable content is another important determinant. With such features as Instagram Shopping, Tik Tok Shop, or Instagram product tagging on YouTube, digital marketing can shift trend noticing into a buying window (Swanson., 2023).

Personalization influenced by data is also another factor that digital marketing makes to the industry (fashion trends). The algorithms recommend products and styles based on browsing and likes and interactions. These suggestions get more specific as time progresses meaning that users will be presented with the fashion trends that are statistically more likely to interest them. The curated experience enables a customized fashion feed which not only acts to expose people to the trend, but also exponentially raises the chance of purchase.

Storytelling also applies in fashion brands digital marketing so that they can associate more meaning in trends (Belova., 2021). They tend to relate the trends to the general cultural patterns like empowerment, mental health, sustainability, or diversity. Such a plan can be used to make fashion choices favourable to young customers' values. To give an example, the advertisement of inclusive sizing or gender-neutral collections does not merely concern the product, but also strives to make a social point, which digital marketing facilitates conveying successfully.

According to Sengul (2025) niche and countercultural trends have been able to flourish in the digital space as well. Whereas mainstream trends are established by their mass appeal, the opposite is true about microtrends such as the dark academia, cottagecore or tech wear communities that harness their respective following online via digital communities and hash tagged subcultures. This style can be made visible, with the help of digital marketing, particularly, community-led marketing, as well as company promotion by power-niche influencers, without resorting to the traditional media exposure.

Sustainability has become a trend on its own as well as stated by Henderson and Loreau (2023). Second-hand shopping, vintage and upcycling have gained traction in the UK and digital marketing companies such as Depop and Vinted have taken advantage of it, with peer-to-peer marketing, community-driven discovery, and customized feeds and shares to help generate sustainable fashion behaviours. The examples of brands that adopt slow fashion include the usage of digital stories, transparency reports, and ethical sourcing campaigns to position themselves on the market.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

In order to analyse the way, digital marketing can be utilized to drive Gen Z to new fashion trends in the UK, one has to base the discussion on existing theoretical frameworks. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) and the Trickle-Up Theory of Fashion are two theories that give the proposed research a solid analytical support. Both theories present valuable perspectives through which the digital behaviour of Gen Z can be understood as well as the processes through which the fashion trends evolve and propagate in the digital world.

1. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

According to Uses and Gratifications Theory readers and the viewers actively approach media in order to satisfy their needs in certain areas: entertainment and information, personal identity realization and social interaction (Camilleri and Falzon, 2021). As compared to previous models that considered the consumer as the weak recipient of media, UGT takes them as active participants to make their choices on what to consume and what not depending on the motive that they may acquire (Camilleri and Falzon., 2021).

The theory can be very useful when referring to Gen Z and digital marketing in fashion. Gen Z does not only use digital platforms as a way of shopping, but also to identify trends, meet peers, explore who they are, discover their own values. Watching Tik Tok styling videos can be

the combination of entertainment and self-expression, as an example. Getting involved in sustainable fashion through Instagram accounts will satisfy the informational and social need to fit into the environmental-friendly value system.

Fashion brands that utilize digital marketing should learn about such motivations to create content that is aligned with the needs of Gen Z. A video length that is less than a minute meets the desire to be entertained and feel urgency, influencer relationship aids social connection and a feeling of personal expression, and brand transparency fulfills the requirement of trustworthy information. The best content is the best content that satisfies a number of gratifications at a time.

2. Trickle-Up Theory of Fashion

Normally, fashion theory dwelt on trickle-down effect whereby it was believed that fashions were constructed in the upper classes and slowly made their way to the masses. The Trickle-Up Theory has however become relevant especially in the digital era especially with the emergence of the Gen Z. According to this theory, fashion trends today frequently have their origin at the grassroots, e.g., in some youth subculture, streetwear culture, or niche-influencers, and gravitate up to the mainstream and even luxury fashion (Mohr et al., 2022).

Such a change is closely connected with the form and influence of online platforms. Trend creation has been democratized on Tik Tok, Instagram, and YouTube, where ordinary users can effect what will be trending. Some kid dressing up vintage pieces in Manchester or an artist in London exploring the gender fluid fashion could initiate a trend that can go viral and bring an impact on world-famous designers.

Gen Z changing the world of fashion is specifically connected with The Trickle-Up Theory. This generation tends to become trend-setters as opposed to trend consumers. They value authenticity, individuality and experimentation hence they are more prone to follow grass-root innovators than the staled fashion houses. The fashion companies that

have thrived in the digital world are those that are out there listening by following what is on the streets in terms of hashtags or viral stories or groundswell communities and then broadcasting or imitating them as brand experiences.

Justification for the Combined Application

When both of these theories are applied, it is possible to have a clear picture of understanding consumer behavior as well as how trends get created in the digital fashion marketing scene. UGT addresses the issue of why Gen Z consumes digital content, what needs it meets and what its messages or forms are most likely to be successful. The Trickle-Up Theory describes trends and the place where the brands can find inspiration and innovation.

In combination, these theories make a case in favour of user-driven and culturally responsive digital marketing. They emphasize the need to produce value to the consumer and at the same time acknowledge that the consumer is the driving force in the determination of fashion agenda. This two-theory framework is an impetus to UK-based brands that focus on Gen Z and improve not only their marketing content but also make their trend forecasting process and community engagement more effective.

2.7 Gap in Previous Research Articles

Although the aspects of digital marketing and fashion tendency are vastly researched in general, there has been a significant research gap in the academic discourse concerning the combined application of digital marketing, Gen Z behaviour, and fashion trend when it comes to studying it in the context of the United Kingdom. Most of the research done is on the overall consumer reaction to the digital marketing implements without exploring the depth of the impacts of the digital marketing implements on fashion-sensitive Gen-Z generation within a given cultural environment in which they operate.

This is one of the critical gaps because it does not focus on fashion identity and consumer behaviour in the UK. Most of the literature available is based on international or American statistics, which are not always relevant to the unique aspects of the British fashion culture, urban-rural differences, and peculiarities of use of such digital services as TikTok Shop or Depop in the country. For instance, Wang (2021) has made a discussion regarding gen Z fashion choices but it may not be relevant in the context of the UK because Jin and Shin (2021) has stated that fashion choices can be changed based on the geographical location. UK gen Z customers usually refer to a special mixture of British street style, multicultural influences, and well-developed youth subcultures. Any research that does not situate these trends within the British context will run a risk of reaching blanket conclusions that cannot possibly reflect regional trends and digital behaviours in detail.

The second gap is the use of less exploited digital marketing forms, including live shopping, augmented and virtual reality, and AI-assisted personalization in the fashion sphere. Brands are increasingly adopting these tools to win Gen Z customers, but scholarly discussion has been mostly on previous means of digital engagement such as email marketing or posting in social media. The effects of the digital usage of immersive and interactive forms on accepting new trends in fashion, particularly the effect on impulse purchases, brands to which people remain loyal, or whether people prefer to get a refund or not, has not been fully researched in literature.

Moreover, influencers and user-generated content are simplified by research. Although research on influencers appreciates their strength, most of them tend to generalize them as a single unit. As it turns out, the space of influencers is varied, with niche influencers called micro-influencers and the viral trendsetters on TikTok taking centre-stage, focusing on ephimeral tendencies. Not many sources establish the difference between the efficacy of these various levels in encouraging

Gen Z to use fashion brands, or the effect of authenticity and being relatable on what credibility feels like in the UK.

2.8 Conclusion

In the UK, digital marketing has become critical in influencing the manner in which Gen Z is interacting with fashion trends. With customized content, influencer teaming, engaging campaigns and new technologies, brands will be able to reach out to this generation in real-time, easy-to-follow forms and very effectively. This study reveals psychological factors and social processes of trend adoption using theories such as Uses and Gratifications, Trickle-Up Fashion, etc. Background The literature has gaps, however, particularly in the areas concerned with UK-specific behaviours and the development of new digital tools, thus suggesting that the research may benefit not only from a more focused approach but also an update. Fashion marketers must recognize the dynamics to ensure that it would be relevant and effective in the future.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this study, the researcher investigates the extent to which digital marketing can affect the Gen Z population in the UK to start consuming and using new fashion trends. As the Gen Z continues to spend a lot of time in the digital space, brands are now using social media, influencer marketing and online advertisements to attract their attention (Munsch., 2021). Fashion marketers must realize the impact of these strategies on reducing fashion preferences and buying behaviour. The approach described in this paper involves the philosophy, research design, research methods, sources of data, ethical concerns used in review of existing literature and secondary sources of data that are used to help in study of the topic.

3.2 Research Philosophy

In this paper, the interpretivist research philosophy is adopted, meaning that it focuses on capturing subjective meanings and contexts of people. In contrast to positivism, where researchers can find objective truths by quantifying the search process, interpretivism can give researchers the opportunity to examine how the Gen Z generation understands the approach and acts on digital marketing choices, and in the circumstance of the fashion industry (Fadiora., 2024).

Interpretivism suits this study due to the reason that the impact of digital marketing cannot be viewed strictly as quantitative, but it concerns emotional, psychological, and cultural backgrounds. The Gen Z is not just a passive audience of any marketing messages, as they are active content consumers, who create their own communities that surround certain trends, and make fashion choices to express their identities (Houshan and Siilsalu., 2024). Therefore, the interpretivist perspective needs to be applied in order to understand the richness of these experiences.

The choice of interpretivism can be explained by the fact that it is exploratory research. The idea is to be able to learn how and why Gen Z respond to particular digital marketing schemes which may include influencer partnerships, Instagram reels, or TikTok challenges, and how these interactions influence their dress style. Such means of understanding cannot purely be understood using statistic numbers.

Moreover, interpretivism endorses qualitative interpretation that is aligned with the secondary data approach of the study, like in thematic analysis of data. Industry reports, previous studies interviews, and thematic information of the social media comments and the online articles will assist in unearthing subtle perceptions that a quantitative paradigm may fail to recognize.

Lastly, interpretation in marketing through interpretivism fits the current state of marketing research which understands co-creation of meaning between marketing and customers. The trends do not exist in fashion as they are enforced; rather, they come as a result of the negotiation between the marketers and the consumers and are usually stimulated by digital platforms. Thus, when trying to figure out the relevance of digital marketing, one needs to decode the meaning-making of Gen Z to achieve the desired result, and interpretivism is the best philosophy to do so.

3.3 Research Approach

This research makes use of an inductive research approach. The process of induction commences with the observation and trends of data, out of which generalised conclusions or theories are formulated (Haque., 2022). In contrast to the deductive method, where the researcher uses tested theories to check them, the inductive methodology enables the researcher to develop knowledge at its simplest level, using trends, patterns and themes identified in the data.

In the current study, it is reasonable to use this method of researching the influence of digital marketing on Gen Z fashion engagement because there is no single, consolidated theory illustrating this new trend. The

fashion taste of Gen Z is dynamically changing, socially constructive, and malleable based on rapidness of digital platforms (Wajdi et al., 2024). Therefore, it is not a hypothesis to be tested but a research whose aim is to extract some value in the present observations in the secondary data.

Speed at which digital marketing takes place and peculiarities of Gen Z behaviour make this topic perfectly appropriate to induction. The interest of this generation in brands via such sites as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram is active, collaborative, and visual (Koohestani., 2024). With the inductive approach, the new trends can be explored as they occur and not limited by the available theories that may not be able to explain fully the current behaviours.

An inductive approach will help with finding emerging themes, which can be based on the literature and reports, i.e., personalization, social proof via influencers, or digital fashion experiences as AR try-ons. The presented insights can be used in a larger conceptual framework exploring the reasons and methodology of the successfulness of digital marketing strategies when it comes to the Gen Z.

In addition, the inductive approach supports the interpretivist philosophical approach because it places an emphasis on meaning and context. It helps the researcher further analysing the data collected in various sources and creating a down-to-earth picture of how Gen Z consumers understand and interact with the digital fashion content.

To sum it up, the inductive research method is appropriate in the given study since the researcher will have an opportunity to create a meaningful body of knowledge on a comparatively young and emerging field, where the trends of consumer behaviour are not quite established yet and the examples of digital marketing development are in a constant process of adaptation to the shifts in technologies and culture.

3.4 Research Method

This work is based on a secondary research approach because they use the pre-existing information e.g. scholarly literature, business reports,

market research, news, and internet material. Secondary research will enable the review of a broad scope of previously gathered information to provide insights on the effects of digital marketing to the Gen Z in the UK with regard to their fashion choices.

The decision to use secondary research can be supported by the fact that sources on digital marketing, Gen Z behaviour, and fashion trends are easily available and well-grounded in a sense that they can provide the information that can be used in the given project. Proper marketing research companies, fashion magazines, and scholarly journals provide healthy amounts of data and analysis, which can be critiqued, analysis can be traced to discover trends and form informed judgment (Lim., 2025).

The secondary research too is more broad in its scope of taking into consideration the views of different points in time and different geographies so as to have a more thorough picture of the phenomenon. It will allow the researcher to draw parallels across media, as well as campaigns, and allow the researcher to comprehend macro-level changes in the way consumers are interacting with digital marketing around fashion.

This approach is especially effective when applied to a subject such as digital marketing that is changing fast and is thoroughly written about in trade publications. As an example, the case studies of the effective digital campaigns addressed to Gen Z may be described in the marketing journals and web articles on the case of ASOS or PrettyLittleThing or the case of Nike (Gradler et al., 2023). All these can be critically analysed to get the knowledge on what strategies are working on engaging the Gen Z consumers.

Besides, due to time limits and the resource scarcity, secondary research may provide access to comprehensive sets of data that would take substantial investments and time to gather at first hand. In order to poll the entire population of Gen Z in the UK, it would take a lot of logistical

and financial resources, whether in the form of a survey, focus group, or experiment.

Also, secondary studies may be easier ethically because it does not require primary data collection methods and will use publicly reported information and the ability to avoid direct permission to use (Cheong et al., 2023). Even so, proper citing and proper interpretation of facts still require ethical care.

In summary, using secondary research is valid because it will offer a vast, credible, and contextual information needed about digital marketing strategies and how Gen Z engages in fashion, at the same time devoid of disadvantages of primary data gathering.

3.5 Data Collection

This research uses secondary sources of research such as journal articles, industry reports, market intelligence reports, news coverage and venerable web materials to collect data. The chosen sources have been chosen due to their relevance, credibility and focus on the trend in digital marketing, consumer behaviour of gen z and the fashion industry in UK (Parmar., 2024).

Theory and critical evaluation of digital marketing, consumer psychology, and generational behaviour are provided in the context of academic literature. Peer-reviewed articles allow validating the study, in the form of scholarly research, and give it depth in intelligencing theabases of conceptual interactions.

The sources used to gather industry reports include Statista, McKinsey, Deloitte, Mintel, blogs, articles, and websites as we get the statistical data, market trends, and consumer behaviours statistics limited to the specific age market Gen Z and digital fashion marketing. Such reports can be of great value in terms of knowing the magnitude, tactics and quantifiable results of online campaigns.

BBC, The Guardian, and Business of Fashion are some examples of some reputable media platforms that break the news on the current situation

around the particular marketing campaign, brand advertising campaign, and consumer trends on the constantly changing market (Tariq., 2021). These can be handy in finding real life examples and recent case analyses.

The online sources of information, like fashion blogs, websites of the respective brands, and social media analytics resources, would give hints on current online campaigns and immediate buyer reactions. They are an additional indication of grassroots trends and viral phenomena that Gen Z themselves may start or intensify.

Various sources used will provide a comprehensive knowledge on the researched topic. Triangulation of data collected using various sources of data makes the findings richer and deeper. All sources types are complementary each giving information that is lacking in another source type; the academic text gives theory, industry reports give data, and web gives live engagement.

The criteria used when selecting the sources are relevance, date of publication (within the last 5 years) and credibility. This will make the data that will be collected timely and strong in terms of thematic analysis to them.

3.6 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

In order to attain relevance and reliability on the secondary data, this study uses a strict process of inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria:

- Publications that have been published in no more than the past five years (2020-2025), so they are still relevant.
- Specific content catering to consumers of Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) in terms of the consumption of fashions and the use of the digital world to engage in marketing.
- Contents that focus on the UK market to be contextually relevant include reports, articles and studies.

- Empirical journal articles, valuable trade journals and quality web based sources.
- Articles on social media such as Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, Snapchat, and influencer marketing, which are the essential elements of Gen Z engagement.

Exclusion criteria:

- The sources that do not provide definitions that clearly differentiate Gen Z and other groups of generations (e.g., Millennials).
- All articles without exception that were published prior to 2020, with the exception of seminal works whose theories form the basis and are directly pertinent to the topic.
- Not-verified news on blogs, user-created content not posted by editors or non-credible sources with no references.
- Examples include sources that are not, or largely, UK-market oriented or fashion-centred digital marketing sources.

Such criteria will make sure that the quality, relevance to the context and currency of data are taken into consideration. The time restriction allows the study to encompass the Gen Z current digital trends and relevant platforms, and since the study focuses on the UK market, cultural, economical, and technological factors specific to the UK are taken into account accordingly.

The exclusion of the generalized or outdated resources will assist in getting focused and relevant, thus avoiding the dilution of findings with irrelevant data. Credible industry and academic sources utilized guarantee the analytical diligence and help to achieve the development of reasonable and valid conclusions.

3.7 Data Analysis

Thematic qualitative approach to the analysis of secondary data is used in this study and it fits very well to draw out patterns and meanings in

the qualitative information. Thematic analysis can help the researcher to identify, analyse and report the same themes that have emerged systematically using various sources of data (Christou., 2022). Since this research is based on the interpretivist philosophy, its thematic analysis allows examining how Gen Z consumers respond to digital marketing in the fashion industry, and how their ideas about it are constructed due to the influence of diverse digital approaches.

The six-phased thematic analysis process adopted by Giang (2021) guides the thematic analysis that is conducted in this study. It starts by the familiarisation stage where the researcher meticulously goes through all the gathered articles consisting of academic articles, industry reports, and all other relevant media sources. This phase plays a significant role in getting into the data and comprehending its depth and background. The second step is the development of the preliminary codes that will include highlighting some important patterns, concepts, or terminologies that will be observed to be recurring in various sources. Such codes are not predetermined but they are rather produced out of the data itself to make sure it is genuine and relevant.

After coding, the researcher proceeds to searching and grouping codes which relate to each other to form possible themes. As an example, codes that surround the area of influence and engagement and popularity, or personalised marketing can be achieved as initial themes. They are then reviewed and refined so that they are mutually exclusive and that they provide the best value of the associated data. The themes that have been finalised are demarcated well and given appropriate names to bring out the essence of the themes and so that they could be easy to interpret and discuss.

The present research is especially suitable to thematic analysis as it can address complexity and subjectivity as is the case with consumer behaviour, and digital marketing. Instead of trying to assess the responses on a scale of numbers, or estimate the impact with using pure numbers, this approach makes it possible to interpret how and why

digital marketing techniques, including social media campaigns, Fashion markets to work with influencers and create digital fashion experiences typically respond to Gen Z audiences in the UK (Parmar., 2024). The approach is convenient and iterative to explore data, and new knowledge comes as the data analysis evolves.

To conclude then, thematic qualitative analysis offers a powerful and rich platform through which to make sense of the broad and rich source of secondary data in this study. It corresponds to the inductive logic and interpretivist position of the research and allows to gain deep knowledge of the mutual constituent nature between digital marketing and the adoption of fashion trends among the Gen Z.

3.8 Reliability and Validity of the Method

The reliability and validity of the research method should also be ensured in order to maintain credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Reliability in this research means consistency and dependability of research process whereas validity covers accuracy and suitably of the inferences made by scrutinizing the data. Though it is a research that is conducted on secondary data, a number of precautions have been put in place to boost the two.

To attain reliability, the researcher follows a dogmatic and clear data gathering and thematic analysis method. There is a maintained coding strategy which is used in an ongoing way during the analysis of data so that the identification of patterns is done in a thoughtful and reproducible but systematic way. The specific criteria of including and excluding data sources are also evident, as only the recent, relevant, and credible publications regarding Gen Z, fashion, and digital marketing in the context of the UK will be used. Such a painstaking procedure will prevent inconsistencies and will guarantee that all the data have been analysed in the field of the desired research.

The concept of validity is taken into consideration through the reference of interpretations in existing theories and cross-referencing conclusions

of different sources (Jean., 2024). The internal validity is enhanced through consulting highly professional literature research and industry reports that have a better probability of providing quality and truthful information. Furthermore, the fact that it makes use of triangulation, whereby different sources are compared e.g. academic text, media articles, and market reports, results in more thought-out and valid conclusions. Although the fact that the study is UK-specific can limit further generalisation to the concept of external validity, the findings can potentially be utilised in other cultural and digital contexts of a similar nature.

They also strive to reduce the bias that might come in through the researcher by occupying in reflexive analysis through constant questioning of assumptions and interpretations during the research. Finally, one can discuss exceptionally high reliability and validity in this qualitative study that is based on secondary data due to the careful selection of data, uniformity in analytical work, and ethical interpretation of the evidence.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In spite of the fact that the present study operates with secondary data, it is still essential to take into account the ethical aspects.

On the one hand, the sources of the used materials should be credible and have good reputation, which ensures data integrity and accuracy. All data is referenced successfully, and according to the norms of academic ethics, to prevent plagiarism.

Second, authorship and intellectual property are taken seriously through citing sources of the original claims made in all the reviewed works (Dratler and McJohn., 2025). Perfect citations are employed to avoid any of the contents being reproduced and/or utilized beyond the freely acceptable tolerable limits as stipulated under fair use and as academic references.

Third, specifically, publicly available data sources are used (e.g., news articles, market reports, social media insights), which practically excludes the possibility of breaching privacy. No confidential information, sensitive or personal information is utilised. Because modified inhuman research is not directly connected with the involvement of people, such points as informed authorization, anonymity, or data protection according to GDPR are not applicable.

Nevertheless, ethical interpretation is imperative. The researcher does not commit the error of misrepresentation of the data, using the results according to the preconceived notions, and over generalisation of the results. There is concern to properly reflect the opinions and contexts of the data sources that are being related to.

Finally, transparency is also assured concerning the manner in which the findings are made and presented. The sources contain clear support to any theme, hence the interpretations are justified and traceable.

Overall, the study is based on foundational ethical principles of respect, honesty, and responsibility as far as it is based on a secondary data only. This will be to assure the study academic and professional ethical exercises.

3.10 Conclusion

This study takes a research direction that is interpretivist, inductive because it employs secondary data and thematic analysis to address the issue of how Gen Z consumers in the UK are enticed to new fashion trends using digital marketing. The methodology is profound, open-minded, and morally proper and based on a vast range of reliable resources. The study aims to extract trends in Gen Z digital consumption by interpolating existing literature and industry insights with the view to deducing patterns in digital consumption with respect to fashion engagement and the implications it has. The strategy fits with the complexity of behaviours of the consumers in a rapidly changing digital environment.

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